

VTA NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BART EXPANSION PASSES CRITICAL HURDLE IN D.C. AND IS NOW ELIGIBLE FOR FEDERAL FUNDING IN FY 2003 BUDGET

SAN JOSE, Calif.—U.S. Representative Mike Honda and San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales today announced that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has given the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor BART expansion project a rating of “Recommended” and approved the project to enter into preliminary engineering (PE), opening the way for more detailed engineering design work. The project will, when completed, bring BART to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara.

The FTA approval means Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) has the ability to proceed with preliminary engineering work.

“This approval was gained after a thorough and rigorous three-month evaluation by the FTA and is a critical milestone in the BART expansion project,” said Rep. Honda, who actively worked with FTA Administrator Jenna Dorn to secure FTA’s approval before the end of the legislative session in October.

“It is a required step. With this approval, we are now eligible for New Starts funding in this year’s House transportation appropriations bill. As this legislative session comes to an end, securing funds for BART is a top priority.”

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San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales, who is also Chairperson of the VTA Board of Directors, was also pleased to hear the news from Washington. "FTA's approval is a critical milestone that allows us to move forward with this project. Bringing BART to Santa Clara County will help fulfill our long-term vision for a complete and effective transportation system in the Bay Region that will relieve traffic congestion and provide the foundation for smart growth in the future."

A number of legislators in Washington have been involved in moving this project forward. Aside from Honda, Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, and Representatives Nancy Pelosi, Zoe Lofgren, Anna Eshoo and Richard Pombo have actively supported this project. Currently, VTA is pursuing a Fiscal Year 2003 appropriation of \$5 million for preliminary engineering from the federal New Starts Program. This request is scheduled to be considered by the House this fall.

The Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor project is part of Santa Clara County's 2000 Measure A Program. This measure was passed with an overwhelming majority vote of 70.4 percent, affirming Santa Clara County's desire to bring BART to the county.

About VTA

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is an independent special district responsible for bus, light rail and paratransit operations; congestion management; specific highway improvement projects; and countywide transportation planning. As such, VTA is both an accessible transit provider and multi-modal transportation planning organization involved with transit, highways and roadways, bikeways and pedestrian facilities.

For more information about VTA projects, call VTA Community Outreach at (408) 321-7575 or (TDD only) (408) 321-2330. You can also log on to www.vta.org.

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